

**REMARKS**

The Applicants appreciate the acknowledgement of allowable subject matter in claims 4 and 5. The Applicants further appreciate the Examiner's willingness to grant an interview on January 30, 2008.

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

By the foregoing amendment, claims 2-6 and 10-13 have been amended and claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer for filing in a continuation application. Thus, claims 2-14 are currently pending in the application and subject to examination.

**Interview Summary**

During the interview of January 30, 2008, differences between the applied art of record and claims 1-14 were discussed. The Examiner conceded that there are differences between the claimed invention and the applied references. For example, with respect to claim 3, the Examiner agreed that the D/A converters disclosed by Tsukamoto in Fig. 17 are not cascade connected as in the claimed invention. However, no agreement was reached.

**Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 1032(a)**

In the outstanding Office Action dated October 18, 2007, claims 1-3 and 8-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Malcolm, U.S. Patent No. 6,373,954 (hereinafter, "Malcolm") in view of Tsukamoto et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,815,352 (hereinafter, "Tsukamoto"). Claims 6-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Malcolm as modified by Tsukamoto et al., as applied

to claim 1 and further in view of Anderson, U.S. Patent No. 6,078,594 (hereinafter, "Anderson". It is noted that claim 1 has been canceled and claims 2-6 and 10-13 have been amended. To the extent that the rejections remain applicable to the claims currently pending, the Applicant hereby traverses the rejection, as follows.

The Applicant's invention as recited in independent claim 3 recites, in part:

digital/analog converting means is structured by a plurality of digital/analog converters and said digital/analog converters are in cascade connection.

In making the rejection of claim 3, the Examiner asserts that Tsukamoto teaches a sound processor of the digital/analog converting means (see fig. 17, 91-93) is structured by a plurality of digital/analog converters and said digital/analog converters are in cascade connection (see fig. 17). *Office Action*, p. 4.

As pointed out during the interview, the D/A converters disclosed by Tsukamoto in Fig. 17 are not cascade connected, as in the claimed invention.

As is well known in the art, a cascade connection is one in which the components thereof are arranged in a succession of stages and each stage is influenced by the output of the preceding stage. The Applicant respectfully points out that the D/A converters 91-93 shown in Fig. 17 of Tsukamoto are not cascade connected, i.e., no output of any of the D/A converters 91-93 of Tsukamoto is input to any other of the D/A converters 91-93. Accordingly, the D/A converters of Tsukamoto are not cascade connected. Accordingly, Tsukamoto does not disclose or suggest digital/analog converting means is structured by a plurality of digital/analog converters and said digital/analog converters are in cascade connection, as recited in independent claim 3, as amended.

Malcolm is not cited for, nor does Malcolm disclose or suggest digital/analog converting means is structured by a plurality of digital/analog converters and said digital/analog converters are in cascade connection, as recited in independent claim 3.

For at least this reason, the Applicant submits that independent claim 3 is allowable over the applied art of record. As claim 3 is allowable, the Applicant submits that claims 2 and 6-14, which depend from allowable claim 3, are likewise allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 3.

#### **Allowable Subject Matter**

Claims 4-5 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 4 and 5 have been rewritten to be in independent form and to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, thereby placing these claims in condition for allowance.

#### **Conclusion**

For all of the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 2-14 are in condition for allowance and a Notice of Allowability is earnestly solicited.

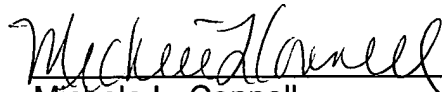
Should the Examiner determine that any further action is necessary to place this application into better form, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of time. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment associated with this

communication to Deposit Account No. 01-2300 referencing client matter number  
100341-00003.

Respectfully submitted,

Arent Fox LLP

  
Michele L. Connell  
Registration No. 52,763

**Customer No. 004372**  
1050 Connecticut Ave., N.W.  
Suite 400  
Washington, D.C. 20036-5339  
Telephone No. (202) 857-6104  
Facsimile No. (202) 857-6395

MLC:cdw

Enclosures: Petition for Extension of Time  
Request for Continued Examination